

What's in a name?

The marriage in 1751 of Joan Carel van Alderwerelt and Alida Anna de Roo, already discussed in “The van Savelsteyn Connection”, led to a series of name changes in later years. First, some background information.

Prior to 1811, records of baptisms, marriages and burials were generally kept by the churches. There were no official state records nor were the spelling and use of names always consistent. In fact, people could and did change the spelling of their name or the entire name without having to go through any kind of legal procedure. In 1811, a population registration system was instituted that was not kept by the church but by the state. This was followed in 1815 by the requirement that any change in name had to be applied for. Formal approvals were in the form of a Royal Decree.

The de Roo family had been part of the Delft scene for quite some time. Willem de Roo was born in Delft in 1662 and died in Batavia in 1712. Joan Carel de Roo was born in Batavia in 1701 and was sent back to Delft as a child in about 1711. In 1724, he married Sara Harpertina van Kinschot, and that marriage produced three children, namely, Alida Anna, born 1725; Willem, born 1729; and Gaspar, born 1731. Both Willem and Gaspar had law degrees and were never married.

In addition to holding many other important functions in Delft, Joan Carel de Roo was Mayor of that city. On 27 May 1727, he purchased the house and lands (ambachtsheerlijkheid) called Rosenburgh, which entitled him to call himself Squire (Heer) of Rosenburgh. Upon his death in 1761, this property passed to his son Gaspar de Roo.

Gaspar de Roo, who also held many important functions in Delft, including that of Mayor, died in 1788, and thus this branch of the de Roo family came to an end. The property, Rosenburgh, went to his sister's oldest living son Rugier van Alderwerelt. Two generations later, Rugier Pieter Magdalenus van Alderwerelt, a grandson of Rugier van Alderwerelt, applied for and was given permission by Royal Decree in 1883 to add the name van Rosenburgh to his name so that this branch of the van Alderwerelt family henceforth carried the name van Alderwerelt van Rosenburgh.

Considering the importance of the de Roo family in the history of Delft, the family had decided that perpetuating the de Roo name was very important. Hence, Alida Anna's second son, Willem Pieter van Alderwerelt, added that name to his so that he became known as Willem Pieter de Roo van Alderwerelt.

We are able to pin down quite accurately when he did this. Official records show that on 2 October 1788 the Staten of Holland and West Friesland acted favorably on his earlier application for Venia Aetatis, a declaration that he was to be considered of legal age. He was then 23 years old, and the legal age for marriage was 25 at that time. This document lists him as Willem Pieter van Alderwerelt. However, we find that in the registration of his intention to marry (ondertrouw) dated 13 August 1789 he is described as Willem Pieter de Roo van Alderwerelt, and this is the first recorded use of that name. As this was well before the 1815 law concerning name changes, no official action or approval was required for this name change. This branch of the family henceforth carried the name de Roo van Alderwerelt.

There is one other name situation that needs to be addressed and that involves the other grandson of Rugier van Alderwerelt. He was born in 1823 and was entered in the civil registration records of Maastricht with the given names of Otto Willem Isaak du Bois. His last name and his father's last name were listed as van Alderwerelt. From extensive research in the civil registrations, it is quite clear that du Bois was never legally made part of the family name, and so the last name of du Bois van Alderwerelt never legally existed.

So, in the case of Otto Willem Isaak du Bois van Alderwerelt and his son Adriaan Pieter August Willem du Bois van Alderwerelt, du Bois was simply one of their several given names. It should also be noted that the birth record of Otto's daughter Catharina Wilhelmina Bertha van Alderwerelt does not make any mention of du Bois. Yet, her tombstone in a cemetery at Baarn, Netherlands, shows her name as Catharina Wilhelmina Bertha du Bois van Alderwerelt, which is of course incorrect.



There is also no evidence that Adriaan's children, William and Frank, were given the name du Bois. The appropriate corrections have been made in the genealogy.

One more name situation bears mentioning. Pieter van Alderwerelt (1619-1681) shown as generation III on page 4 of the genealogy, had a brother named Jan (1614/?) who had 5 generations of descendants until this branch died out in 1905. In 1755, Emperor Frans I awarded Jean Louis van Alderwerelt (1711-1778), generation VI, the title of Rijksbaron (baron of the Holy Roman Empire). By Dutch Royal Decree of 1822, this title was confirmed for his son Jean Constantijn (1748-1825). By Royal Decree of 1824, Marinus Constantijn baron van Alderwerelt was given permission to add Houtuyn, the name of his grandmother, after his own. With this, the name van Alderwerelt Houtuyn was created. When Jan Constantijn Pieter baron van Alderwerelt Houtuyn died without issue in 1905, the title of baron and the name van Alderwerelt Houtuyn ceased to exist.

**D.M.O. de Roo van Alderwerelt
2006**